

MTSA Regulations found at 33 CFR Subchapter H

PACD #42-04 AUG 26, 2004---POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL FAQ

Q. Is the practice of some business establishments to require crewmembers to surrender company issued crew identification (ID) or U.S. Immigration documents, or passengers to surrender their cruise ship passenger identification cards a MTSA requirement?

Ans. Crewmember or passenger ID's are a commodity potentially being sought by subversive elements. Recently it was learned that unidentified persons attempted to purchase crewmember ID's. Even though the Coast Guard has not received reports of any crew ID theft, the potential for theft and possible duplication of crew or passenger identification is a serious reality. The Coast Guard has no authority to regulate the practices of the shore-side business establishments identified above. However, the Coast Guard is responsible for ensuring that appropriate security measures are in place aboard ships calling in U.S. ports. Therefore, the following practices are recommended:

1. Company Security Officers (CSO)/Ship Security Officers (SSO) should ensure that all crewmembers are aware of the need to protect their ID's. Their documents must be in their possession at all times or secured appropriately. Passengers should be similarly reminded to not surrender cruise ship boarding or identification passes as collateral for obtaining shore-side services.
2. CSO's/SSO's should provide written policy and training detailing the proper use and safeguarding of crewmember ID's. In general, ID's should not be surrendered unless specifically authorized by the SSO. Consequences for loss of crew identification should be documented and strictly enforced.
3. CSO's/SSO's should consider printing warnings on passenger boarding/identification cards, advising passengers to not surrender these cards to shore-side establishments. Additionally, CSOs/SSOs should establish alternate procedures for verifying the identity of passengers who have reported lost or stolen boarding/identification cards.
4. CSOs/SSOs may want to consider developing an alternative type of crew identification so that businesses requiring proof of identification may continue to do business with the vessel's crew. This alternative identification should not be used for access to the vessel.
5. CSOs should ensure that SSOs and vessel personnel with security duties are aware of this security issue and should remind all security personnel to be vigilant in their duties.
6. To promote crew vigilance, CSOs/SSOs may want to consider offering rewards to crewmembers for credible information on security threats or concerns.
7. SSOs are encouraged to develop and post at access control points, lists of Stolen or Lost IDs to be used by watchstanders. SSOs can forward these lists to the CSO for further distribution to other ships in the company's fleet.

Note: For further guidance, a facility owner/operator should contact their local Captain of the Port (COTP/FMSC).